

Shigeru Ban Architecture

In the Context of Traditional Craft Techniques

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Today's architecture is all about renewable energy, reusable and recyclable materials, sustainable and flexible solutions, minimizing the material and nourishing the spiritual needs of people. However, nowadays we are also witnessing a trend for rediscovering and reinventing well-known materials, and techniques to fit the new context of our time.

The subject of this paper is the influence of traditions, their application in the modern world, and the possible avenues for their further development. I will focus on elements of the social and experimental architecture of Shigeru Ban which could be viewed as results of the reinvention of traditional techniques.

The objective of this paper is to study and analyze various Shigeru Ban interpretations of traditional craft practices in working with paper, wood and bamboo, and discover possible modern applications and development trends for these media.

I will perform a contrastive analysis comparing planning and composition schemes, same as spatial and structural solutions used in several Shigeru Ban projects, to those characteristic of traditional craft techniques. I will look at examples of traditional origami, bamboo and woodwork to see how they are translated into larger-scale structures. I will compare the form-creating principles of everyday household objects, interior design, furniture and architecture.

The paper will provide examples of the use of seemingly fragile materials to form strong structures by weaving, folding or implementing positions the right structural scheme. The materials I will be focusing on the most will be bamboo, wood, and paper (as a building alternative to heavier materials, and as something that can be easily recycled or processed for reuse). I will explore both exterior and interior items, their use in the past and today, and how they were reinvented by Shigeru Ban to appear in his experimental structures such as bridges, towers, pavilions, etc.

As a result of my work, I hope to formulate transferring principles, which were influenced by traditional craft techniques and are visible in Ban's architecture. I will also draw parallel with traditional Bulgarian architecture in terms of the use and interpretation of wood as a traditional material.